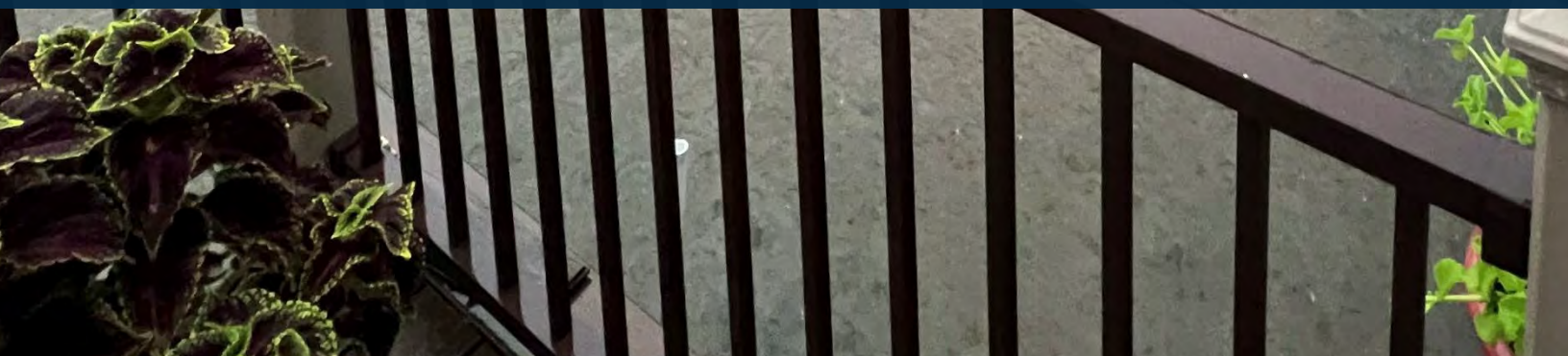




7.0 PLAN MAINTENANCE



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7.1 PROCESS SUMMARY

A formal plan maintenance process for monitoring, evaluating, and updating the HMP must take place to ensure that the HMP, and specifically the mitigation strategy, remains current and relevant. Updates are required every five years from the date the plan is approved, which occurs after FEMA completes its plan review and determines that all requirements have been adequately addressed, known as "Approvable Pending Adoption." Participating jurisdictions then each move forward with formally adopting the plan. For multi-jurisdictional plans, FEMA considers the plan approval date to be the date of the first jurisdictional adoption.

Regularly scheduled evaluations during the five-year cycle are important to assess the effectiveness of the program and to reflect changes that may affect mitigation priorities. This evaluation process must keep the public engaged throughout the plan's ongoing implementation. Bergen County has opted to pursue a very similar strategy as the previous plan update for the next five years (2026 – 2031) although some changes have been made to account for new FEMA guidance released in 2023.

The Bergen County Office of Emergency Management will continue to take the lead role in coordinating the overall plan maintenance effort, with ongoing support and feedback from the Steering Committee. This section explains who will be responsible for maintenance activities and what those responsibilities entail. It also provides a methodology and schedule of maintenance activities including a description of how the public will be involved on a continued basis.

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7.2 MONITORING, IMPLEMENTATION, AND EVALUATING EFFECTIVENESS

Monitoring implementation and evaluating effectiveness of the mitigation strategy are tasks effectively accomplished together. Monitoring implementation involves tracking progress and reasons for lack of progress. It is important to document successes on a regular basis. For instance, it is typically difficult to list all public outreach activities conducted over a five-year period unless you have a log to monitor outreach. Recognizing lack of progress provides the opportunity to change the approach and evaluate the mitigation strategy. Evaluating effectiveness complements monitoring because it is a chance for evaluating both progress and lack of progress. When projects are accomplished, it is helpful to consider whether they were successful in accomplishing the intended goal and objective. For instance, did grant-related outreach increase the number of residents gaining access to mitigation project funding. If so, the action might be continued and if not a new or revised action may be considered. Evaluating lack of progress provides the chance to consider whether new resources might be needed or if the action might be discontinued because it is not feasible or a current priority.

Bergen County intends to monitor implementation and evaluate effectiveness of the mitigation strategy through a combination of efforts by both the Bergen County Office of Emergency Management and municipal representatives. The Bergen County Office of Emergency Management will host an annual meeting to review the plan inviting municipal representatives and key stakeholders. Prior to the meeting, the County will distribute the Annual Progress Report (Appendix D), to complete and submit prior to or at the meeting. Appendix D also includes an Annual Progress Log for the County to use to track the responses from the municipalities. As part of this plan update, the Annual Progress Report was

consolidated to align with the discussions the Project Team held with each municipality in the fall and winter of 2024. The Report asks the following questions:

1. Did any significant hazard events occur within the past year? Any changes to your hazards of concern?
2. Have there been any reports, studies, or documentation of change in potential hazards, that you are aware of?
3. Have there been any major changes in growth or development?
4. Is your community currently updating or creating any land use, development, housing or other planning documents? If so, how is the hazard mitigation plan being integrated or referenced in that effort?
5. Are there any mitigation projects underway or completed? Any actions that no longer are applicable or needed?
6. Are there any new projects you would like to add to your mitigation strategy?
7. Have you engaged the public on hazard mitigation? If so, how?

Issues that arise during monitoring and evaluation which require changes to the risk assessment, mitigation strategy and other components of the plan will be used in two ways. First, they will be used to improve implementation between plan updates and may warrant amendments to the plan components dependent on their urgency. Second, new information will be incorporated during future plan updates. If there is information provided in relation to an action the community would like to take during the five-year period, that would be more time sensitive than informing future plan updates and would require an amendment.

7.3 UPDATING THE PLAN

BCOEM and representatives from the 70 municipalities will hold annual Evaluation Meetings to review the Plan during a The Bergen County Multi-Jurisdictional HMP will be updated every five years, as required by the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000. Bergen County may also select to update the plan following a disaster event that impacts how the County and municipalities want to implement the mitigation strategy. All plan updates will be led by the Bergen County Office of Emergency Management. Future plan updates will account for any new hazard vulnerabilities, special circumstances, or new information that becomes available, specifically from the Annual Progress Reports.

7.4 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN PLAN MAINTENANCE

The public and other stakeholders must be given opportunities to become involved during the Plan's regular maintenance and implementation. The public will have access to an electronic copy of the current HMP through Bergen County Office of Emergency Management hazard mitigation planning webpage: <https://www.co.bergen.nj.us/emergency-management/about-emergency-management>. Information on upcoming events related to the HMP or solicitation for comments will be announced via the County website.

It is important to understand perceptions of the plan's effectiveness and degree of success to help maintain support for the plan and provide accountability for those responsible for its maintenance and implementation.

These activities were reviewed as part of the 2026 Plan Update to maintain public participation for the next five years:

- The Bergen County Office of Emergency Management will continue to maintain the hazard mitigation planning website.
- Each municipality is encouraged to maintain a link on their jurisdiction's webpage to the County mitigation planning website, if they have not already done so.
- Each municipality is encouraged to conduct annual interviews and/or smaller meetings with stakeholders, including organizations that represent socially vulnerable populations, climate change experts, and the public. This will be accomplished through incorporating discussion of the mitigation plan into other regularly attended meetings. Conversations from these meetings should be included in the Annual Progress Report.

- Municipalities will consider annual flyers, newsletters, newspaper advertisements, and Radio/TV announcements to supplement annual interviews/meetings and will implement some or all of these at the discretion of the municipality. At a minimum, the County will issue an annual press release.
- Municipalities are responsible for keeping track of any comments they receive on the plan and bringing this forward for discussion at the Annual Plan Evaluation Meetings.